

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) will hold the second of two hearings on Iraq on **Sept. 19 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Russell Senate Office Building, Room 485**

. \* The hearing will examine the causes and patterns of intra-Muslim sectarian violence, including what role, if any, the Iraqi government currently plays in that violence. It will address the extent to which individual Muslims are being targeted for killings and other violence on account of their religious identity, and examine U.S. policy regarding Iraq's refugee crisis.

**Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR)**

is expected to participate

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Witnesses include:

**Assistant Secretary of State Ellen Sauerbrey** , Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (invited)

**Dr. Judith Yaphe** , a specialist in Middle Eastern political analysis at the National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) (confirmed)

**Dr. Kenneth Katzman** , a specialist in Middle East affairs for the Congressional Research Service, with special emphasis on Iran and Iraq (confirmed)

**Mr. Bakhtiar Amin** , a former Iraqi Minister of Human Rights with two decades' experience in the field of international human rights. (invited)

**Ms. Judy Cheng-Hopkins** , the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (confirmed)

**Ms. Niurka Piñeiro** , Regional Coordinator with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (confirmed)

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\*Tentative location; please check [www.uscirf.gov](http://www.uscirf.gov) closer to the date to confirm.

**The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Michael Cromartie

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